



terrierabouttown

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The top dogs of Downing Street make their own statement online

Henry Zeffman

He may have succeeded in keeping a low profile despite holding one of the greatest offices of state, but rare glimpses into Philip Hammond's home life are being posted on the photo-sharing network Instagram — by his dogs.

The activities of the chancellor's two pets, Rex and Oscar, have been shown for the past two years on a dedicated profile named Terrier About Town.

The account, which has more than 500 followers, makes no mention of the dogs' powerful master, and appears to be run by Mr Hammond's wife, Susan Williams-Walker.

The life of Rex, a welsh terrier who "loves walking, shopping and eating out", is chronicled on the page. He is often joined by Oscar, a wire-haired dachshund, but the terrier will always be "the king of my household", according to the account's profile.

Though the account mostly portrays the dogs' love of walks, snoozing and toys, some pictures have a political bent. In one post, Rex is photographed sitting wistfully next to a plate of biscuits and a tray of mugs. "Committee meeting at my

The chancellor and his wife, Susan Williams-Walker



house today," the caption reads. "Boring, snoring and she won't even let me try out the biscuits!"

In another, Rex is seen sitting upright next to a bottle of champagne and a packet of Waitrose smoked salmon. The caption reads: "Am hosting a fundraising drinks party tonight! Champagne is chilled and I've personally tested all the canapés!"

On the morning of the general election, when Mr Hammond was foreign secretary, Rex is shown standing next to the front door demanding a walk.

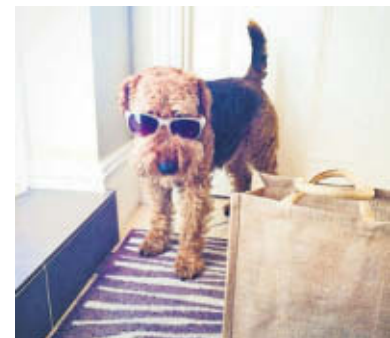
"Mum insisted on staying up all night to watch #GE2015 results but my manifesto commitment has been broken — walk early, walk often!"

As the chancellor considers how best to deal with the impact of Brexit on the economy, he could perhaps do worse than ask Rex, who is photographed sitting in front of an issue of *The Economist* about the euro crisis in Greece. "With so much happening on the world stage at the moment, I decided to take to my bed to read up on the issues of the day #grexit," the caption reads.

If his dogs' reading habits are to be believed, Mr Hammond's newspaper of choice is *The Times*. Rex was photographed with a copy of the paper of record twice this year —



The adventures of Philip Hammond's pet dogs, Oscar the wire-haired dachshund and Rex the welsh terrier, are documented on social media. A snap last new year, top right, suggested the chancellor and his family enjoy a lively festive period



with one of the captions reading: "Not feeling so good about myself this morning as I've just read in today's newspaper that a dachshund has 66,000 Instagram followers! #mustdobetter".

When Oscar entered the Hammond household more than a year ago, the caption reveals that they chose to get a different breed because "Dad says this time he wants a dog with recall!"

Since Mr Hammond entered the Treasury he is said to have had disagreements with Theresa May over how to go about negotiating a Brexit deal, but the dogs' Instagram account reveals that the pair also differ over what type of meat to serve at Christmas.

Last year, the two dogs were photographed waiting eagerly at Mr Hammond's side while he carved a turkey, whereas Mrs May is known to opt for goose instead.

The Hammonds appear to have a lively festive season: on New Year's Eve last year, Rex was photographed standing between more than a dozen bottles of wine and several bottles of spirits.

When the dogs moved into Downing Street with Mr Hammond this year, observers in Whitehall feared that they might clash with Larry, the cat who has been chief mouser to the Cabinet Office since February 2011 — especially as Welsh terriers are prone to chase cats.

However, Larry spent much of the summer scrapping with Palmerston, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's cat, and the pair had to be treated by vets. Whereas Larry can roam freely across Downing Street, Rex and Oscar are understood to be permitted only in areas between the entrances to Downing Street and the chancellor's residence above No 10. The pair have frequently been seen using the lift, possibly in order to minimise the risk of a confrontation with Larry.

A Downing Street source said: "The Hammonds' dogs are just outrageously cute. Larry is also cute but he has an evil streak."

How Corbyn 'smuggled' stash of cheese over Mexican border

Lucy Fisher
Senior Political Correspondent

His predecessor as Labour leader was mocked for looking like Wallace, the wensleydale-chomping animated character, but it is Jeremy Corbyn rather than Ed Miliband who is the real cheese lover.

Mr Corbyn has a "passion" for the food and was once so keen to offer his brother-in-law a taste of the best British cheeses that he "smuggled" a bag of it into Mexico.

On discovering just how strict the regulations governing the import of dairy products into the Central Amer-

ican nation were, Mr Corbyn came clean about his stash to border guards. To his delight, officials waved him through with his gift.

In remarks that will be seized on by supporters as a riposte to those who doubt his patriotism, Mr Corbyn has also declared that British cheese is superior to French fromage.

Mr Corbyn, a keen gardener who keeps an allotment, revealed his other foodie love this month. "I find cheese very interesting," he said.

Although he refused to be labelled an expert, he admitted that he had been a member of the all-party parliamentary group on cheese. "The variety of cheese

in England is amazing," he said, adding that one of his favourites was somerset brie, a mild-flavoured artisanal cheese that often carries an aroma of mushrooms and grass.

Shropshire blue, which reminded him of the West Midlands county in which he spent much of his childhood, was another favourite. The semi-firm orange cheese that is a cross between stilton and cheshire cheese, origi-

Like Wallace, Jeremy Corbyn is a fan of British cheese



nates from Inverness but was renamed shropshire blue in an effort to boost its popularity.

Mr Corbyn said that English cheese was better than French because it is "sharper" and "there is more variety".

However, he conceded he liked camembert and said his tip was to leave it to over-ripen, adding that he liked it best with mould on.

The Islington North MP, who has been a vegetarian for nearly 50 years, has a well-documented passion for "growing

things" and enjoys spending time on his allotment near his north London home.

Last year he posed with a marrow at the start of Labour's conference in Brighton, and joked: "I know I am going to be told off for ever. It is David Miliband and the banana all over again. His [was a] pathetic little banana [though] — and I have got a massive marrow."

During the cascade of resignations of his frontbench team in July, it emerged that Mr Corbyn found time amid the emergency response planning to attend his local allotment association. Despite growing calls for him to step down, he refused to miss the East Finchley Lot Association's annual meeting.